

REMARKS

In response to the election requirement sent forth in the Action, applicants elect to prosecute species 2, Figs. 2 and 3, *without traverse*. Applicants agree with the Examiner that claims 17-19 are generic and that, by piecing together the Examiner's list of which claims read on which species, claims 1, 2, 4-8, 17-19 and 21 read on the elected species. As indicated above, claim 3 is canceled without prejudice.

Applicants have amended the claims above to put them into better condition for examination in this application and to point out more clearly certain features of the invention which were implicit in the claims prior to the amendments above. Because of the allowability of the generic claims, the Examiner is *not* authorized to cancel non-elected claims at this time.

Since generic claims 17-19 are allowable over the prior art, as indicated by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences in the parent application, early action indicating the allowability of all the claims in this application is solicited.

Applicants also note that the claims distinguish over the structure disclosed in Montierth because (a) Montierth's plug does not extend over the entire axial length of the honeycomb structure as claimed; (b) the increased thickness portion of Montierth does not extend *continuously* from the interior of the honeycomb structure to a *lateral* outer wall surface, since each of Montierth's increased thickness portions is interrupted by thin wall sections on either end. Furthermore, there is no motivation in any of the prior art to modify any of the disclosed structures so as to arrive at the claimed invention.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by this amendment, captioned "Version with markings to show changes made".

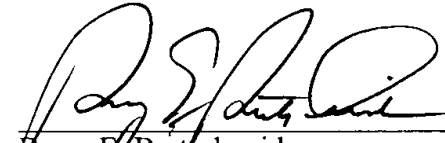
In the event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of

such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit**
Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 356312000121.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Claims:

Amend claims 1, 4, 8, 17-19 and 21, as follows:

1. (Amended) A monolithic ceramic filter comprising a honeycomb structure comprising cells extruded along an elongation axis and partitioned by a partition wall formed of a porous ceramic material, wherein an increased thickness portion of said partition wall of the honeycomb structure has an increased thickness as compared to a remaining basic portion of the partition wall [so as to constitute], said increased thickness portion constituting a reduced flow resistance portion which continuously extends from an interior of the honeycomb structure to [an] a lateral outer wall surface of the honeycomb structure [and] so as to form a continuous flow path of reduced flow resistance as compared to the flow resistance of the remaining basic portion of the partition wall within the increased thickness portion along the partition wall extending over [at least] a plurality of cells to reach said lateral outer wall surface of the honeycomb structure,

said lateral outer wall surface extending substantially parallel to the elongation axis of the cells, and

said increased thickness portion extending over substantially an entire axial length of the honeycomb structure along the elongation axis of the cells.

4. (Amended) The ceramic filter as defined in claim [3] 1, wherein the reduced flow resistance portion comprises a plurality of wall portions of increased thickness[,], as compared to the thickness of said remaining basic portion of the partition wall, [which extend] said plurality of wall portions of increased thickness extending from one [side] cell opening end of the honeycomb structure to another [side] cell opening end thereof.

8. (Amended) The ceramic filter as defined in claim 1[, 3] or 4, wherein the increased thickness portion of the reduced flow resistance portion has a thickness that is 2 to 5 times the thickness of said remaining basic portion of the partition wall of the honeycomb structure.

17. (Amended) The ceramic filter as defined in claim 1[, 3] or 4 [or 8], wherein the honeycomb structure has a filtration membrane on a surface facing each cell of the honeycomb structure.

18. (Amended) The ceramic filter as defined in claim 17, wherein an intermediate porous layer is disposed between the honeycomb structure and the [filter] filtration membrane.

19. (Amended) The ceramic filter as defined in claim 17, wherein the [filter] filtration membrane is a porous ceramic having a smaller pore size than that of the honeycomb structure.

21. (Amended) The ceramic filter as defined in claim 1[, 3] or 4, wherein the increased thickness portion of the reduced flow resistance portion has a thickness that is 1.5 to 10 times the thickness of said remaining basic portion of the partition wall of the honeycomb structure.